

## REMARKS

In the Office Action, the Examiner has rejected claims 1-3 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 1,454,900 to Leventry. Reconsideration of the rejection of claims 1 to 3 is respectfully requested for the following reasons.

The Examiner defines the “plurality of clamps” as the ones (three in quantity) disposed vertically on each of what Leventry defines as a “cue holding unit”. These constitute the “plurality of horizontally oriented clamping mechanisms (8) spaced vertically along the frame”. On that basis, the Examiner identifies the actuation means (17) which functions to open and close all these clamping mechanisms in unison. However, the Examiner then indicates that the spring mechanism (19) maintains all the clamping mechanisms individually normally biased in a closed position. The spring mechanism normally biases all the (three) clamps in a closed position, but does not individually normally bias the clamps. This can clearly be seen in Fig. 2 of Leventry and is expressly indicated at page 2, lines 120-127: “the spring being in this manner arranged to exert a downward thrust on the rod so as to normally maintain the jaws of the several gripping means closed”.

The Examiner then states that each clamping mechanism is individually self-adjusting upon closing and refers to the passage on page 1, lines 70-75, wherein it is indicated that the gripping devices adapt themselves to cues of various sizes. However, the manner Leventry accomplishes this is set out on page 2, lines 74-85. He realizes that the cues, regardless of size, are more or less uniformly tapered and therefore proportions the jaws of the several gripping means accordingly so that the cue will be gripped with a substantially uniform degree of pressure at the several points of engagement. Thus the clamping mechanisms of Leventry are self-adjusting, but relative to one another and not individually as required by Applicant. The

difference can readily be seen if one were to place a cue upside down in the cue holding unit of Leventry. Once the jaws of the upper gripping means engages the thicker end of the cue, the middle and lower gripping means would not be able to close substantially farther, leaving the respective adjacent portions of the cue unclamped.

Thus, the clamping mechanisms of Leventry are neither individually normally biased towards a closed position nor individually self-adjusting upon closing as required by Applicant. These features of Applicant's invention permit unitary opening of the individual clamps while not restricting the clamps to close in an identical manner. Since each of the Applicant's clamps is individually biased toward a closed position, the clamps will naturally adjust to the thickness of the retained panel(s). Accordingly, Applicant's clamping cartridge can accommodate a series of different panels comprising panels of different thicknesses and/or a varying number of panels of same or different thickness within each clamp. Should the bias of any one clamping mechanism fail, the individual biasing ensures that the panels in the remaining clamping mechanisms remain secured. Thus, it can be seen that the provision of individually biased clamping mechanisms acts as a safety feature in Applicant's device.

Furthermore, the arrangement of the plurality of clamping mechanisms of Leventry would not permit a plurality of panel-type articles to be clamped in generally parallel spaced-apart manner in accordance with the preamble of claim 1. Leventry shows only one object, a cue, being clamped. Although the gripping means of the Leventry device could each clamp the edge of a panel-type article, the panel-type articles would not be clamped in a generally parallel spaced-apart manner but rather a co-planer manner. On the other hand, Applicant's clamping mechanisms are spaced-apart along the frame and are generally oriented perpendicular to their direction of spacing. Thus, in order for it to be able to clamp a plurality of panel-type in

generally parallel spaced-apart manner in accordance with the preamble of claim 1, this would imply that the direction of clamping would have to be in the direction of spacing of the clamping mechanisms, which is not the case with the Leventry arrangement.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1 is neither anticipated by Leventry nor is rendered obvious in view of other cited references and a favorable reconsideration to this end is earnestly solicited. Claims 2 and 3 include all of the limitations of claim 1 which patentably distinguishes over Leventry for the reasons given above and, accordingly, claims 2 and 3 are believed to patentably distinguish over Leventry within the meaning of 35 U.S.C 102(b).

In view of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully submits that the application is in condition for allowance. Accordingly, favorable reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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